

## Podcast 143: Shem, Part 2

This is the second part of a series about Shem, who came to be known as Melchizedek, one of the Patriarchal Fathers, who established a city of peace that ultimately achieved the status of "Zion" and was taken up into heaven.

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DENVER: this is in Moses chapter 6:

And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image, and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years, and he begat many sons and daughters; (Moses 6:10-11.)

Adam begat many sons and daughters, but the son named Seth was the one to whom this priesthood went because there is only one appointed.

Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begat Enos, and prophesied in all his days, and taught his son Enos in the ways of God; wherefore Enos prophesied also. And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begat many sons and daughters. (Moses 6:13-14.)

Seth begat Enos and many sons and daughters. But the right of the lineage and the priesthood went from Adam, to Seth, to Enos.

This is a description of that priesthood which was briefly restored in one person, Joseph, to be given to Hyrum, because it goes to the oldest righteous descendent. And when it was first restored through Joseph Smith, Hyrum was not yet qualified. But when Hyrum became qualified by January of 1841, in the revelation given then, Hyrum is the one to whom the birthright went, being the eldest and being the one who was qualified. This is why it was necessary for Hyrum to die before Joseph, so that in this dispensation Joseph and Hyrum can stand at the head. Because if Hyrum had not died first but Joseph had died first, Joseph would have died without having had the passing.

Notice that Seth had many sons and daughters. Then you get to the next, Enos. He lived and begat Canaan. Enos also has many sons and daughters but Canaan was the one upon whom the birthright – this follows all the way down. You can read it in Moses chapter 6 how it descends through the line. This pattern repeats over and over again.

As I'm talking about this I'm making reference to a diagram that appeared first in *The Millennial Star* on January 15, 1847. But what you can see in the *Joseph Smith Papers* on page 298 where they reproduce the same diagram of the "kingdom of God", the only difference being that I have filled in the names on this chart so that you can see where the names go.

We get to the point in the history of the world in which, after the days of Shem, who was renamed "Melchizedek", people fell into iniquity. They fell into iniquity and they lost the birthright. There was no continuation of this. It was broken by an apostasy and it had to be restored again, which ought to give all of us great hope because Abraham sought for this. He sought for a restoration of the kingdom of God. He sought for a restoration of this, which only one man on the earth can hold at a time. Abraham 1:2:

And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

When you are in possession of that you have no problem asking God and getting an answer. It is the right belonging to the fathers. After a period of apostasy, and the break of this line, Abraham received it by adoption. Therefore, this power has the ability to cure the break. This covenant making through God has the ability to restore the family of God, even when wicked men kill in order to destroy it, even when a substitute needs to be made, even when the fathers turn from their righteousness, yet God is able to cause it to persist. Joseph Smith was doing something which no one else either understood or had the right to perpetuate.

This continued through ten generations from Adam to Melchizedek, but through Abraham it continued five generations. It appeared again once on the earth in a single generation that included Joseph and his brother Hyrum.

Now even the mockery of it has come to an end, because there is no such thing as a perpetuation "in honorable mention" of the descendants of Hyrum Smith in the office of Patriarch in the Church. There have been many signs that have been given by God that He was about to do something new from the time of the death of Joseph Smith till today. All that was left at the end was for a witness to be appointed, to come and to say, "It now has come to an end." In the last talk that I gave in the 10 lecture series I said, a witness has now come, and I am him. It has come to an end. One of the signs of it having come to an end was the passing of Eldred Smith. There are many other signs that have been given if you are looking for them. You can see them all along the line.

In the book of Matthew, chapter 24 is Christ's most extensive prophecy about the future events including the time of His Second Coming. While He gives some details in Matthew chapter 24 there is a statement that He makes: "*As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*" (Matthew 24:37)

He makes an analogy between the events that occurred during Noah's time and what we will see on the earth at the time of his return. Let me read you a description of the events at

the time of Noah—and these are the kinds of events with which we typically associate the days of Noah: *“And God saw that the wickedness of men had become great in the earth; and every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, being only evil continually. The earth was corrupt before God, and it was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and behold I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.”* (See, Genesis 1:5-7; Moses 8:22, 28-30)

Ominous. Terrible. Reason for concern. That is what we generally think of. But there’s another side to that. That other side includes obviously Noah. You can’t have the days of Noah without having a Noah. Another contemporary who lived at the same time with Noah was Enoch, who built a city of righteousness where people gathered together to worship the only true God, who were then in turn taken up to heaven. That group of people, taken up to heaven, are going to return with the Lord when He comes again in glory. Book of Jude –there is only one chapter in there. *“Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.”* (Jude 1:14) There were those that were taken up into the heavens numbering in the tens of thousands who will return with him.

So if there is reason for pessimism when Christ predicts that, *“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the time of His return,”* (Matthew 24:37) there is also extraordinary reason for optimism because we are going to see things like Noah and his family –that included Shem, who would be renamed Melchizedek, about whom the apostle Paul had a great deal to say in the book of Hebrews comparing that man, a son of Noah, to the Lord Himself –actually we ought to flip that. He compares the Lord Himself to that man. And then there is Enoch. And so while we tend to look at the prophecy Christ gave concerning His coming negatively, about how far degenerate the world is going to go, those are the tares ripening.

Christ said, *“We’re not going to uproot the tares, bind them in bundles and burn them, until the wheat also becomes ripe.”* (Matthew 13:30) You are here, you are Christian, and God would like you to be wheat. He would like you to ripen in righteousness while the world ripens in iniquity.

*“[The Holy Order] was first given to Adam; he obtained the [first presiding position on the Earth], and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He’s Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the [Holy Order]; He was called of God to this office, and was the Father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held the keys, first on earth, and then in heaven.*

*“The [Holy Order] is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The*

*keys have to be brought from heaven, whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from Heaven it is by Adam's authority.*

*...He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. This may take place before some of us leave this stage of action. The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe but retains his standing as the head of the human family." (TPJS, p. 157).*

The Holy Order really begins at the point that Adam, the first man, who is called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38. Adam, the first man, obtains the Holy Order in the beginning, and included within it, is the right to preside over all of the human family and then the right to minister to his posterity, and to continue to hold that presiding position until the end of time.

Now Joseph skips from Adam down to Noah because Adam had a position and dominion and a right over all of humanity and Noah occupied the same position. All the descendants were looking to him, genealogically, as a father. The right descended down to Noah, through the Fathers, and these held that same Holy Order. But they had siblings and they had relations who were not their descendants. Therefore, although they were within the Holy Order, unlike Adam and unlike Noah, there were other people living who would descend outside of their genealogical connection. They would not be the father of these people, but the Holy Order was passed down in this fashion. Joseph is looking at this from the perspective of who has it all, and all was combined into Adam and into Noah. There's a shift in the landscape that's going to take place later but we'll get to that in a moment.

Joseph says: "there are two priesthoods spoken of in the Scriptures, viz, Melchizedek and Aaronic or Levitical. Although there are two priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to [I'm going to change the word now to the Holy Order] and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world, to the latest posterity on the earth; and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven" comes through the Holy Order. "Its institution was prior to 'the foundation of this [world] where the morning stars sang together or the sons of God shouted for joy' and is the highest and holiest [order] and is after the Order of the Son of God." I'm going to pause there.

We think that the renaming of the Holy Order to the Melchizedek priesthood, in order to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of the Son of God, was done out of respect for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and that's true enough. However, the Holy Order, by its very nature, includes the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God; one of whom was also Adam. When the apostle John wrote his epistle, he described those who had come in by way of conversion through him and received from him what the Lord had given to him, and he says: "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be*

*called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:1-3.)*

I would like to suggest that the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God includes the fact that those who inherit the Holy Order *are* sons of God. Therefore, in a way, calling it the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, is a way of identifying the recipient as someone who has become one of God’s sons. I think it’s appropriate to regard the primary identifier—that is the subject of who the Son of God is—to be Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Because quite frankly, He’s the only one who attained the resurrection, and it is through the power of the resurrection that we’re going to come forth. We do not have the power in ourselves to rise from the dead. The wages of sin are death, we’ve earned those wages; we all will die. The Savior did not earn those wages, He died, and therefore His death was unjust and the law of justice got broken when He died. Therefore, whenever justice makes a claim on any of us He can point to the fact that justice extracted from Him eternal life, and that is an infinite price for Him to have paid. Therefore He has compensated for all of mankind’s shortcomings [and] failures.

Christ is the means by which we lay hold upon the promises but it is His intention to make of us all sons of God. Therefore, the Holy Order after the Son of God is when the name is announced, self-identifying the person holding such a Holy Order as one of God’s sons, even though they may be mortal, even though they may be in the flesh. The Holy Order is for that very purpose and is after the Order of the Son of God. “...All other priesthoods are only parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same, and are held, controlled and directed by it. It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time.”

Therefore, among other things, the purpose of the Holy Order is to put in place a mechanism by which God can reveal from heaven what is necessary for the salvation of man on earth, in every generation, in order to fix what is broken, in order to restore what has been lost, in order to repair, heal, forgive, and reconnect those who are willing to give heed to the message sent from heaven, so that they can rise up to become sons of God.

The Holy Order descended from Adam in turn. We’re not going to do it but if you take the time to go through and look at who got ordained, Seth was a replacement for the slain Abel. Cain was an elder brother. Cain would have qualified as the elder brother if he had been righteous for inheriting the Holy Order. He had lived long enough and he had been observed by his parents long enough so that Eve identified Cain as a man who had been gotten from God. Therefore she knew he would not fail, which means that for at least some prolonged period of time after the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve had drifted into apostasy, Cain exhibited not only an interest but an adherence to what was being taught by the first parents. Eve celebrated that they at last had someone to whom the Holy Order could be passed. Cain was not the oldest son. He was the *oldest righteous son* and as the oldest

righteous son it would have passed to him in due course. Abel, his younger brother, was probably in his day righteous because of the positive example of his older brother Cain. If you've got someone in the family who is on the right path, it's so much easier for the sibling to respect the example of someone similarly situated with them than it is to listen to the parents. Abel likewise followed in the path of righteousness.

Satan put it into the heart of Cain to view the inheritance that he was going to receive of the Holy Order as an opportunity to gratify his pride, and to satisfy his ambition, and to exert control and compulsion, because if he were the one in the line then the Messiah would descend through him and he would have a patriarchal position superior to the Messiah himself. This was an important part of the plot of the adversary. If the adversary could gain control over the inheritor under Adam of the Holy Order, then as I just read a moment ago, before the Savior returns, when dominion was given to Adam, it was by God's word and God cannot break His word. The right of dominion had been conferred. It has to be returned to Him. If Cain were the one in the position to exercise control then he could exert whatever conditions Satan put into his heart before he would return the right of dominion back to the Savior. Thus, if a disciple of Satan were to be in possession of that Holy Order in that line holding dominion, all of the conditions that Satan had demanded in the preexistence, which were rejected by the Father and created the war in heaven designed to destroy the agency of man, could become the condition for the redemption of this creation. Therefore, Cain's apostasy represented an enormous threat to the salvation of everyone who would live thereafter. As a consequence of that, the offering by the younger brother was approved and the older brother Cain was told, "You need to stop what you're doing, you need to repent and return, and if you do not, sin lieth at the door. The adversary is ready to enter into your house." This represented a serious frustration or threat to the second great conspiracy to destroy the souls of men and to capture this creation. Therefore, Satan put it into the heart of Cain to murder his brother and Abel was slain so that, the theory was, by controlling the position that necessarily meant that the Messiah would be a descendant of Cain's, the line would come through him, and he would have the authority, the control, the dominion, and the right to change the plan or the conditions for the salvation of the souls of men in this world.

At this point we're at the very beginning, we haven't gotten very far. But it is essential when you begin to talk about the Holy Order that you start here. If you don't start here, if you want to start at the time of Moses and the Aaronic priests, or you want to start at the time of Joseph Smith and talk about ordinations in June 1831, or if you want to talk about the three witnesses identifying the Quorum of the Twelve and then ordaining them, you're not going to comprehend what the Holy Order is all about because the Holy Order has, as part of its implication, the right of dominion over all creation. That was what it was established for and it came down to the beginning. It belonged to God. It is why God is God. In essence the Holy Order is to create of flesh and blood a surrogate for the Father and Mother. That's what the Holy Order was designed to accomplish.

In the beginning, when you're talking about this process, the reason why we have Seth as the next person is because Cain fell, Abel was murdered, and perhaps, because of the example, Adam and Eve in their sorrow were able to inform Seth of things that secured his

fidelity to God. It descended in regular course down through these fathers until you get to Shem who was called Melchizedek. Mulek, king; Zedek, priest. It's a new name for the man, Shem, and then it simply falls into disrepair or apostasy and we encounter our first gap in the descent from the days of Adam down, which lasted several generations until we get to Abraham.

Abraham also happened to have a genealogical right but that wasn't what was important. In the case of Abraham "...finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers..." The "blessings of the fathers" after which he was seeking was the Holy Order. He wanted to become one like those that had been in the beginning.

When God spoke to Cain He called him to repent. So, God speaks to Cain and tells him to repent. He didn't repent; he did forfeit, but he forfeited by becoming the first murderer. So the first time that you do something wrong, would you want God to say, "There you go, you're done, you're cut off, you will never have an opportunity to become what I would like you to become, a son of God," or would you want him to call you to repentance? Because God called Cain to repent and he didn't; he went out and he murdered his brother. He just got more determined to accomplish what he wanted. At that point Cain did not die as a result of the murder of his brother. He was driven out but he wasn't killed, and he did lose the right. So, even though he was living and even though he was alive at the time of his brother Seth, the right went to his brother exactly for that reason. The first instance of error, I mean heavens, [the] Kirtland Safety Society may have been out to get rid of Joseph's position.

*"...I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge."*

When you think of the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, don't think of it exclusively as some sort of status. It's implicit that what that includes is possession of *great knowledge and greater knowledge*. "A man cannot be saved in ignorance," as Joseph put it. "A man is saved no sooner than he gets knowledge," but implicit in those statements by Joseph Smith is that the purpose of the knowledge is so that you can be a greater follower of righteousness. It's not so that you can play spiritual Trivial Pursuit and win because the knowledge has to be implemented into practice in order for it to have the desired effect. Without accompanying obedience to the things that are known there is no salvation in that. It has to be as Abraham puts it:

*"To be a greater follower, and to possess a greater knowledge and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir." (Abraham 1:2).*

At this point in the creation Adam would have all mankind descend from him and Noah would have all mankind descend from him, and therefore they would be the fathers of

nations. Abraham knew that was part of what was involved. It's not merely knowledge for knowledge' sake, it's being put into a position in which there is a posterity involving nations that would look to him as they looked to Noah, [and] as they had looked to Adam, as their father.

Think of fatherhood as an opportunity to nurture, to assist, to provide for, to care for, to bring along, to take what is innocent and malleable, and turn it into something that is God-like, responsible, capable, something or someone who can stand on their own two legs and defend the truth when called upon to do so. Someone that will themselves be a vessel of righteousness. Don't think of a father as a bully with a whip or a belt. What Abraham desired was to be a servant; that was what his ambition to be a father of nations involved. And so he became a rightful heir, holding the right belonging to the fathers. *"It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time... even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me."* (Abraham 1:3). That's where it came from. A son of God descended through those fathers to Abraham, because Melchizedek, after a period of apostasy lasting generations, reconnected father Abraham into the fathers. Which is the issue raised a minute ago about this genealogical thing. This is non-genealogical. This is a righteous man in a world of apostasy, looking to reconnect to heaven. He becomes the father of the righteous because he's the first example of a generation, a man in a world of apostasy coming out of that apostasy and reconnecting to Heaven.

There were generations separating Abraham from Shem. Abraham qualified to receive the rights belonging to the fathers because he sought for his appointment, he possessed knowledge, he lived consistent with the knowledge he had, and he wished to have greater knowledge, so that he could obey more commandments so that he could gain further light and knowledge by the things that he learned through obedience.

When you get to what happens after he's connected up, the Lord talking to him says: *"My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Holy Order unto all the nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father; (See Abraham 2:8-10).* That's non-genealogical. That's the same process through which Abraham went to become a descendant of the fathers. It's reconnecting. Whoever does that, in whatever generation, is a descendant and can call Abraham their father.

Abraham 2:9-10, and I am going on to 11, so right in there.

*"...I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Holy Order) and in thy seed (that is, the Holy Order), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the*



*seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of eternal life.” (See Abraham 2:11).*

Abraham says: “Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee.” (Abraham 2:12). He’s saying, that whenever you receive the Gospel, whenever you receive **this** Gospel, and it’s really hard to try and get this Gospel back on the earth. There was still a great deal left to be recovered, restored, and returned when Joseph was killed at 38½ [years old]. But when this Gospel—the one that Abraham had received—was on the earth at any time then whoever receives that is a descendant of Abraham. They are part of the family of Abraham and he is their father, and so he becomes the father of many nations. He instructed and passed along the same birthright to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to Joseph, and to Ephraim, and then it rather turns into the same sort of mess that we had previously until the time of Moses.

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The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- A fireside talk on “Plural Marriage”, given in Sandy, UT on March 22, 2015;
- Denver’s *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #1 given in Cerritos, CA on September 21st, 2017; and
- A fireside talk titled “The Holy Order”, given in Bountiful, UT on October 29, 2017.